

years of their existence, compared to 10 percent for other IRAs. In order to prevent accountholders from unknowingly rolling their IRA funds into SIMPLE IRAs and being surprised by an increased early retirement penalty, current law prohibits rolling funds over into a SIMPLE IRA from other retirement accounts.

However, SIMPLE IRAs have the same early withdrawal penalty as other IRAs after that initial 2-year period, and consumers and financial planners have struggled with the rollover restrictions as they attempt to consolidate accounts.

This week, I will introduce legislation to allow for rollovers into SIMPLE IRA accounts that have met the 2-year threshold. The Joint Committee on Taxation has previously estimated this legislation would have a negligible effect on Federal tax revenues. This bill will simplify retirement planning and ensure a complex Tax Code does not prevent sensible financial planning decisions. Individuals should be able to consolidate their retirement funds in a way that best meets their needs.

This legislation is a small but important first step in the long road to ensuring our tax system works for Americans, not against them.

SHORT-TERM HIGHWAY FUND EXTENSIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, 2-year short-term highway fund extensions have become one of Congress' most costly habits. Kudos to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, which has marked up the highway portion and may come to the floor this week with a 6-year bill.

That bill is not yet paid for, but the Senate is at least making progress toward a 6-year bill, the kind that is needed to make a dent in the backlog of our construction projects in the States.

We should not be deterred by the likelihood of another short-term bill, perhaps going to the end of the year. The goal before the year is out must be a long-term bill.

Congress has taken to authorizing the highway trust fund for 2 years, knowing full well that the trust fund, collecting gas user fees at 1993 levels, would run out even before those 2 years are out; then the waltz begins with endless short-term bills.

The States are disgusted and exhausted. MAP-21 ran out before the end of its 2-year lifetime. The last short-term bill extension was so useless that it has lasted longer than expected because the States could not apply the funds to the backlog of now endless rescheduled projects; 6-month extensions have yielded 6-month projects, usually only patchwork.

This poster goes beyond showing that the short-term extensions have been

useless to the States. These short term bills and extensions are having negative effects on the pocketbooks of our constituents. The highway user fee, which has not been raised for 22 years, costs drivers \$97 a year. The bad roads that are the result cost those same drivers \$515 per year.

Find your State for the cost to your constituents. Here is a random sample: Louisiana, \$514 per year; Oklahoma, \$763 per year; New Jersey, \$685 per driver; Ohio, \$446 per driver; California, \$762 per driver; and Pennsylvania, \$471 per driver.

All the figures are high, regardless of State or region of the country, and those high dollar amounts go out of the pockets of our constituents to patch bad roads, instead of putting the funds into fixing those roads, bridges, and transit.

Congress' short-term attention to our roads, highways, transit and bridges is breaking the bank, not for the Federal Government, but for our constituents. It is no longer the old adage "you can't get something for nothing" rather, not funding the highway trust fund for 6 years costs the people we represent not nothing, but \$515 per driver.

We have got to fund our transportation projects or ask our constituents to pay for their bad roads. The costs to the American people make our options clear what the best thing to do is.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS DENYING JUSTICE TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is failing rape victims.

Across America, an estimated 400,000 untested rape kits sit on shelves. Government officials long blamed a lack of resources to test the kits; so Congress fixed this problem in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, as it is called.

VAWA included the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act, or SAFER, which allows and mandates that 75 percent of Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant funds go directly to test the long backlog of rape kits.

The bottom line, money has been allocated to fund the backlog of 400,000 rape kits. Funds are required to be made available for audits, so we could find the true number of languishing kits throughout different States and then test them.

The goal of SAFER was to ensure that no rape kit went untested, so all victims had answers and all rapists were brought to justice; yet, Mr. Speaker, it has been 2 years. Kits remain in basements on dusty shelves, and nothing has changed.

The money is there; the law is written, but the DOJ, the Department of Justice, shamelessly ignores this man-

date leaving sexual assault victims waiting for justice. Meanwhile, untested rape kits create an unfair treatment of victims. One thing it does is it allows the guilty outlaws to go free and prevents the innocent from being exonerated.

Also, the statute of limitations may expire. Then, when the criminal is captured, he may escape justice because the kit was analyzed too long after the crime was committed. That is a travesty of justice. It is an insult and shameful treatment of sexual assault victims.

To quote an old legal maxim, "the criminal goes free because the constable has blundered" or, in this case, the constable is incompetent.

Without this SAFER Act, which allowed the implementation of funds to analyze backlogs of rape kits, we would still be in a problem that we had 2 years ago.

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But these funds are available for the States to analyze and get the kits tested. Once tested, the results would allow the apprehension of criminals.

This is not occurring. The Department of Justice has yet to even offer the SAFER audit grants to the States. The DOJ cannot show that 75 percent of the funds are going to direct testing and lab capacity enhancement, as required by the law.

To give rape victims justice, DNA often holds the critical key and the only key to learning the identity of the perpetrators. Without this, justice is often delayed or denied forever.

Ignoring SAFER is an affront to sexual assault victims. Mr. Speaker, victims deserve to know who assaulted them. They need to know for peace of mind. It is mental turmoil for rape victims not to know the identity of the perpetrator while sometimes they still fear for their own safety. A rape kit DNA test may prove to be their best and last and only hope in knowing the identity of the rapist.

Bureaucrats should do their job. Quit making excuses for not implementing the law.

In my 30 years as a prosecutor and criminal court judge, I talked to and met a lot of sexual assault victims. Sexual assault, or rape, is, to me, the worst crime in society. And rape victims, more than anything else, want to know who did it. They want to know who did it.

We have the capability of helping rape victims know who the perpetrator in 400,000 cases. Why aren't we doing it?

Not knowing the identity of a rapist is haunting to their victims. It is traumatizing. And to know that the rapist still may be on the loose because the testing kit was not done is inexcusable incompetence.

Each day that goes by, we are running out the clock on the statute of limitations, increasing the chance that criminals may escape the long arm of the law. It is time to analyze the